4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control and modernization of processing units.

5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for eliminating pest incubation in the product especially the mangoes for gaining access to overseas markets.

6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of floricultural items and selected fresh fruits and vegetables and fruits.

7. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.

8. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

9. Providing assistance in development of data base and dissemination of market information.

10. Providing assistance for setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, lack of contamination & ensuring freedom from bacteria & fungi;

**List regarding patenting of Indian products**

†304. PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:

SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether USA has asked for a list of Indian products with regard to their patenting by other countries;

(b) if so, what is the purpose of asking for this list;

(c) whether Government have furnished the said list to USA;

(d) if so, the number and names of such products; and

(e) the steps taken by Government in order to prevent patenting of any Indian product by other countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) No, Sir.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) Patents are granted by respective Governments under their Patents Laws. Whenever information is received about the patents being taken on certain products which are not considered patentable, steps are taken to assess whether the grant of patent can be challenged.

**Export of leather**

†305. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to State:

(a) Whether it is a fact that huge amount of foreign currency is earned through export of leather;

(b) if so, what has been the percentage of average export of leather, out of the total export, made by the country during the last few years;

(c) whether it is also a fact that unfinished leather, finished leather, leather articles, shoes, different parts of chappals and shoes are exported from the country in different forms; and

(d) if so, their annual average quantity and value in terms of rupees?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. export of leather and leather products and its share of total exports during the last 3 years are given as under :

(value in Rs. Crores)

| Year | India's Total exports | Export of leather and leather products | Share of leather and leather products in the total exports |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1996-97 | 118588.23 | 5700.63 | 4.81% |
| 1997-98 | 129830.39 | 6157.06 | 4.74% |
| 1998-99 | 141603.53 | 6955.77 | 4.91% |

(c) and (d) India has exported finished leather, leather footwear, footwear components, leather garments, leather goods, saddlery and harness and leather gloves as under :

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.